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ABSTRACT

More than 500 million women live in the rural regions of Third World countries and all are illiterate. This book is intended to give these women a face and a voice. The book contains eight chapters and a list of further readings. Chapter 1, "How is illiteracy defined?", views a literate woman as one "who possesses sufficient knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic to guarantee an improvement in the quality of her own life and that of her family, and to facilitate her full participation in the development of the group and community." Chapter 2, "The figures speak for themselves," presents statistics on illiteracy rates for women in developing countries. Chapter 3, "Portrait of a rural women," describes the plight of the rural woman in terms of work load, health, nutrition, shelter, lack of natural resources, and discrimination based on sex. Chapter 4, "Why teach rural women literacy?" explains how women's literacy can enhance economic development. Chapter 6, "Schooling," describes the underattendance of girls, and the sex discrimination portrayed in school books. Chapter 7, "Obstacles to literacy," gives examples of the grueling daily schedule of the rural woman. Chapter 8, "Action," proposes using technology to ease the work load, and allow more time for literacy programs. It also describes large and small scale literacy programs. Appended are a standard model for the presentation of a project to a potential donor, an example of a project document, a list of equipment, and a standard job description. (KS)

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